

LEONARD BERNSTEIN

CANDIDE - FACSIMILE - FANCY FREE - ON THE TOWN

OVERTURE BALLET BALLET THREE DANCE EPISODES

Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra
Leonard Slatkin



CDC-7 47522 2

BERNSTEIN: CANDIDE • FACSIMILE • FANCY FREE
ON THE TOWN • SLATKIN • SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCH.

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ON THE TOWN
Three Dance Episodes
SAINT LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
LEONARD SLATKIN



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- 1 Overture to "Candide" 4:16
- 2 - 11 "Fancy Free" (1944)
 - 2 "Big Stuff" (Introduction to "Fancy Free," jukebox style) :48
(with Jean Kittrell, vocal & piano)
 - 3 Opening Dance 2:55
 - 4 Scene at the Bar 1:54
 - 5 Girls' Entrance 2:46
 - 6 Pas de deux 2:58
 - 7 Competition Scene 3:18
 - 8 Variation I: Galop 1:20
 - 9 Variation II: Waltz 2:46
 - 10 Variation III: Danzon 2:47
 - 11 Finale 5:25
- 12 "Facsimile" (Choreographic Essay for Orchestra, 1946)
- 13 - 15 "On the Town" (Three Dance Episodes)
 - 13 The Grèat Lover 1:42
 - 14 Lonely Town (Pas de deux) 3:54
 - 15 Times Square: 1944 5:03

"Facsimile" & "Fancy Free" with Barbara Liberman, piano

Total Time: 61:08

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"Facsimile" & "Fancy Free" with Barbara Liberman, piano

Total Time: 61:08

Recording Producers: MARC AUBORT/JOANNA NICKRENZ

Engineering: ELITE RECORDINGS, Inc., N.Y.C.

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Leonard Bernstein's surest creative instincts have been of and for the theater. Bernstein himself frequently acknowledged a "theatrical" element in his symphonies and other concert works, several of which have their foundations in literature, philosophy, or his own observations on the human condition. This productive affinity is brilliantly evident, of course, in the ballets and musical comedies represented in this recorded collection, some of which go back to the very beginning of Bernstein's extraordinary career.

Candide does not go that far back, but was composed by a solidly established Bernstein in the mid-Fifties; it continued to occupy his attention from time to time, in fact, into the present decade, and has been categorized, from one production to another, as both a musical comedy and a "comic operetta." As originally introduced at the Martin Beck Theater in New York on December 1, 1956, *Candide* had a book by Lillian Hellman, after Voltaire, and text by John Latouche, Richard Wilbur, Dorothy Parker and Bernstein himself. The cast was made up of opera singers. The production was not a success. Various modifications were made in staged and concert performances over the years, and a new book by Hugh Wheeler was substituted for the Hellman original in Harold Prince's production of 1973, with new text by Stephen Sondheim and Richard Wilbur, and with additional music, but for a smaller ensemble. This was a success, and so was the "opera house version" introduced by the New York City Opera in 1982, also produced by Harold Prince and conducted by John Mauceri, who had presided over the 1973 production. For this latest version Mauceri undertook to reassemble and expand the music, with help from the late Hershy Kay in orchestration, and from Bernstein himself, who also rewrote some of the text; this production has become a staple of the NYCO repertory, and was recently recorded in full.

During all these years, of course, the marvelous Overture has enjoyed a healthy life of its own in Bernstein's brilliant concert arrangement. It is a scintillating, tuneful and eminently substantial piece, a contemporary American counterpart to such famous curtain-raisers as the overtures to Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla*, Weber's *Abu Hassan*, and Rezníček's *Donna Diana*. The big lyrical tune is from the Act I duet "Oh happy we," and the rousing one at the end is from Cunegonde's song "Glitter and be gay," which, like the Overture itself, has become a popular number on concert and recital programs in its own right.

• • •

4 All the other music here was composed ten to twelve years earlier than *Candide*, and indeed these three works of the Forties seemed to grow almost directly out of each other. The musical *On the Town*, produced at the end of 1944, was more or less an expansion (with new music) of the scenario of the ballet *Fancy Free*, produced earlier the same year. That ballet's success led also to a Ballet Theatre commission for a new work, which turned out to be *Facsimile*. It was composed in three weeks in the summer of 1946 and first performed at the Broadway Theater on October 24 of that year, with choreography by Jerome Robbins and Bernstein himself conducting.

Robbins, who had been Bernstein's collaborator in *Fancy Free*, was to be the choreographer for both of his subsequent ballets, the last one being *Dybbuk* (New York City Ballet, 1974). In *Facsimile* Robbins also took part as a dancer (as he had done earlier in *Fancy Free*), together with Nora Kaye and John Kriza; Oliver Smith designed the sets, Irene Sharaff the costumes. The concert version of the score, which Bernstein labeled a "choreographic essay," was introduced by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra under his direction on March 5, 1947.

In this brief ballet, as in so many more extended works in various forms, Bernstein expressed his concern with the spiritual state of human beings and their interrelationships — with such basic ailments as boredom, loneliness, the feeling of being unfulfilled or "unintegrated." The very title *Facsimile* alludes to the superficial nature of relationships which can only be regarded as inadequate substitutes for, or "facsimiles" of, those with genuine substance. The program note for the premiere carried the statement: "Small inward treasure does he possess who, to feel alive, needs every hour the tumult of the street, the emotion of the theater, and the small talk of society."

The setting is not in a city, but on a beach, a lonely one on which only three characters appear — a woman and two men. Since the "choreographic essay" comprises essentially the entire ballet score, with conspicuous differences only in the last of the four sections, the action may be described in terms of these sections, or episodes, which are played without pause.

5 First there is a Solo — the Woman by herself, trying to pass the time. (Motifs introduced at the outset by the oboe and then the flute are to be the sources of virtually all the thematic material that follows.) Next is a Pas de deux: she meets the First Man, as restless as herself; they flirt in a waltz, then become passionate, then just as abruptly break away and withdraw further into themselves. The third section is a scherzo-like Pas de trois in which the Second Man makes his appearance and the anticipated triangle complications develop — till the Woman calls a halt (in the ballet she actually shouts "Stop!") and the men stand by, numbed. The final section is a Coda: the men leave, and the Woman remains alone and unfulfilled, as at the beginning.

In November 1943 Bernstein, then the 25-year-old assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic, took over a concert for the indisposed Bruno Walter on very short notice; his brilliant success made him famous overnight and brought him invitations to conduct orchestras all over America. He was already making a name for himself as a composer, having scheduled the Pittsburgh premiere, just two months later, of his *Jeremiah* Symphony (which he would subsequently record with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra) and just completed several other works, among them the one-act ballet *Fancy Free*, which, with Robbins' choreography, was given its premiere by Ballet Theatre at the old Metropolitan Opera House on April 18, 1944.

The setting for this ballet, as for so many of Bernstein's stage works, is his own New York, and the time is the very time the work was created, the middle of World War II. Three young sailors on shore leave meet on a street corner and go to a bar to look for action. There they find two girls; they compete for their attention, dance with them, and lose heart when the girls decide to leave. After a final beer, the sailors themselves leave the bar. Outside they notice another attractive young woman; they affect nonchalance for a matter of seconds, and then light out after her as the curtain falls.

Before the ballet begins, the blues song "Big Stuff" (associated with the legendary Billie Holiday) is heard from a jukebox behind the curtain. The song is broken off by the orchestra as the curtain rises; the ballet itself is in seven sections:

OPENING DANCE

SCENE AT THE BAR

GIRLS' ENTRANCE

PAS DE DEUX (based on "Big Stuff")



COMPETITION SCENE

VARIATIONS: I. GALOP; II. WALTZ; III. DANZON

FINALE

While the score is rarely performed in its entirety without the stage action, the three Variations — constituting the most extended single number and the one that may be said to represent the heart of the ballet — have become a popular concert piece on their own. The three dances in this section are the solos in which the respective sailors try to impress the girls. Bernstein has provided his own description of this part of the score and its relation to the stage action:

8 “The first sailor [in the Galop] aims to appeal with a kind of acrobatic, vaudeville showiness; the second [in the Waltz], with a mock gentility, abruptly shifting to bumps and dance-hall devices; the third [in a Danzon, modeled on the Cuban pattern], with seductive Latin-American gestures, grotesquely parodied. The term ‘variations’ is used in the ballet sense, but the music is also in variation form, and the composer points to the opening three notes of the Waltz as the nuclear subject of the three dances. Echoes of one of the main motives of the ballet as a whole are also heard . . .”

During the summer following the premiere of *Fancy Free*, Bernstein and Adolph Green (to whom that score was dedicated) expanded the ballet scenario into a full-evening entertainment by sending the three sailors — now named Gabey, Chip and Ozzie — on wider-ranging adventures and delving a little more deeply into their respective personalities. Betty Comden joined the team as co-author, and they called their show *On the Town*; it opened on Broadway on December 26, 1944, and ran for 163 performances. The movie followed about a decade later.

What happens in *On the Town* is that Gabey comes across a poster in the subway bearing a photograph of the current month’s “Miss Turnstiles,” and insists on seeking her out. His two companions agree to help him in his quest, in the course of which they run into interesting situations of their own. In the end Gabey does find his girl, and she is as pleased about it as he is.

The three dance episodes which Bernstein gathered together to form a concert suite are in a sense an extension of *Fancy Free* — they are in the same style and exude the same flavor — but they do not use any actual material from the earlier work. Neither do they represent a summary of the action in *On the Town*: in their concert form they simply constitute an appealing package of some of the score’s brightest orchestral moments. It may be of interest, though, to connect the respective episodes with the scenes from which they were drawn:

9 THE GREAT LOVER. Gabey, having set off on his search for “Miss Turnstiles,” falls asleep riding the subway and dreams of winning her with his romantic ardor.

LONELY TOWN (PAS DE DEUX). In a thoroughly uncomical scene, Gabey, alone, watches an impressionable high school girl in Central Park respond to the advances of a more worldly sailor — only to be rejected for her naivete.

TIMES SQUARE: 1944. At the end of Act I the three sailors meet in Times Square (which had a rather brighter character in 1944 than it does now) to compare notes and begin a night “on the town.” The main thematic material in this brilliant and boisterous finale is from the song “New York, New York (it’s a helluva town).”

— Richard Freed

LEONARD SLATKIN

Following the Saint Louis Symphony's 1985 concert in Vienna, Gerhard Kramer of *Die Presse* wrote, "Leonard Slatkin, chief conductor of the Orchestra since 1979, [is] to all appearances about to follow in the footsteps of Leonard Bernstein as the leading American conductor." Robert C. Marsh (*Chicago Sun-Times*) has called him "the orchestra builder," with "all the skill necessary to lift musicians to the level where they give their best performances."

In a major article in *Time*, which ranked the Saint Louis Symphony among the two best American symphony orchestras, critic Michael Walsh declared, "Saint Louis has come into its own as a tightly disciplined ensemble under the impressively gifted American conductor Leonard Slatkin."

10 Slatkin began studying violin at age three, piano at eleven, composition at fourteen, and viola at fifteen. He first studied conducting in his teens with his father, violinist/ conductor Felix Slatkin; with Walter Susskind, then music director of the Aspen Festival; and with Jean Morel at Juilliard. Soon after his conducting debut at 22, he began his association with the Saint Louis Symphony in 1968. Since then, he has progressed from assistant conductor to his present post of music director. During this period, he has also served for two years as music director of the New Orleans Philharmonic, as well as being named principal guest conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra.

In 1974, Slatkin attracted nationwide attention in his New York Philharmonic debut, substituting on very short notice for ailing Riccardo Muti. The critical acclaim led to his being asked to debut in Chicago that April. Since then, Slatkin has been named

one of three regular guest conductors with the Chicago Symphony (the other two are Claudio Abbado and Erich Leinsdorf).

Slatkin has conducted most of the world's finest symphony orchestras, including those of Atlanta, the Berlin Philharmonic, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Montreal, the NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation) Symphony, Philadelphia, Royal Philharmonic, San Francisco, the Scottish National Orchestra, the Stuttgart Opera, and Toronto. In 1981, he made his first appearances in the "Mostly Mozart" Festival in New York and Washington, D. C.

His recordings with the Saint Louis Symphony have received a total of fifteen Grammy nominations and two Grammy awards.

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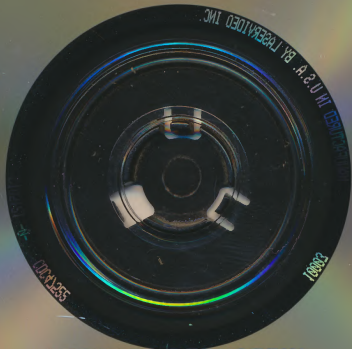
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LEONARD BERNSTEIN
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1946) 13-15 ON THE TOWN (Three Dance Episodes)
LEONARD SLATKIN
SAINT LOUIS
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